MEMORIAL

OF THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

IN REGARD TO

THE INDIANS.

ROSE & CO., PRS. 6 So. CALVERT ST. BALT.

MEMORIAL.

To the President of the United States, the Secretaries of War and of the Interior, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives, the following memorial in relation to the Aborigines of our Country, respectfully represents, that the memorialists are members of the Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, and are representatives, now assembled in Conference in the City of Baltimore, of the Six Yearly Meetings, or general Assemblies of our People, whose members reside in the States of New York, Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Iowa, and in the District of Columbia. For a very long period, the Society of Friends, from sympathy with suffering humanity, have been deeply interested in the Indians of our Country. Since the first settlement of the Friends on this continent, they have always advocated and practiced a liberal and just policy towards the Aborigines. The efforts of Wm. Penn for the benefit of the tribes residing within the present limits of the State of Pennsylvania, have received the admiration of the world. These efforts have been continued by the Society to the present time. Our Records show, that, in the winter of 1795–96, a delegation of our people waited upon the President of the United States, and also on the Secretary of State, under whose particular care the Indians at that time were, acquainting them with the concern of our Religious Society, for the instruction of the Indians in the cultivation of their lands, and in other subjects which would tend to their comfort and improvement, civilization and enlightenment. The President, George Washington, then in Philadelphia, assured the delegation, that the benevolent objects of the Friends, as thus set forth, were fully approved by him. The Secretary of State also approved of the objects of Friends, and manifested a desire to co-operate with the Society in promoting the Indians' welfare. In pursuance of the designs and concern of Friends thus officially approved, the Society proceeded, at their own expense, to erect mills* at Waupaghkannetta, and schools at that place, at Lewistown, on the Auglaize River, and other places in the State of Ohio, and at Cattaraugus and Alleghany, in the State of New York. Our records show, that one of the Chiefs went into the mills at Waupaghkannetta, for the purpose of obtaining instruction in the management of them, in which he succeeded, and they were placed under his charge. In 1804, under the superintendence of the person placed among the Indians, by the Friends, there were

* Grain Mill and Saw Mill.

raised on one farm an abundance of different kinds of vegetables and other productions of the garden and field, and a number of swine; and the young Indian women had learned to spin and knit; and when the report was made, 2d month, 4th, 1805, these young Indians were knitting yarn of their own spinning. In 1822, a tract of land was purchased adjoining the Indian Reservation at Wanpaghkannetta, containing 214 acres, on which the necessary buildings had been erected for a school house, and a dwelling house for the superintendent and his family. About twenty acres of the land were cleared, and under cultivation, lessening the cost of transporting provisions. This improvement gave great satisfaction to the Indians. The mills were in good running order, under the management of an Indian.

Members of the Society, under a religious concern, went to reside amongst them in Ohio and New York, to instruct them in agricultural pursuits, the mechanic arts, household economy, and school learning; and these labors were continued, with marked and very satisfactory evidences of improvement. Those tribes in Ohio, to whom our care had been extended, have since gone, or been removed West of the Mississippi River; and those at Cattarangus and Alleghany, have become so advanced in civilization and enlightenment, as no longer to need our assistance and care.

These simple facts are presented, in order that you may see that our concern is one of long standing, and that you may judge of its character and its depth. This long continued and active connection with the Indians, and the personal acquaintance and affectionate friendship of our ancestors with some of the prominent Chiefs, as Red Jacket, Little Turtle, Five Medals, Corn Planter, and others, have caused us to continue to be close observers of the events affecting their condition, from that time to the present.—We have *felt* much, but have seen no way for efficient *action*. The picture of the treatment of these people, as drawn in the Annual "Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affiffairs" for the last six years, in the "Defence of Commissioner Bogy," the "Letters of the Secretaries of War and Interior on the Fort Phil Kearney Massacre,"* the "Letter of the Secretary of the Interior of July 13th, 1867, communicating information touching the origin and progress of Indian hostilities on the Frontier,"† and the "Report on the Condition of the Indian Tribes," by Senator Doolittle, Chairman of the Joint Special Committee of the two Houses of Congress, Jan. 26th, 1867, is one which we do not feel called upon to characterize. We have viewed it over and over, with double sorrow. Sorrow for the poor, oppressed, withering Indian: Sorrow for the Government that fails to afford him better protection; fails to comply with the terms of the most solemn treaties, and whose officers, agents and employees, practice such injustice, cruelty and wrong upon them, as we find there recorded in so great a number of instances. And then, the sad consequences that follow, in the destruction of these poor people! As pathetically stated by one of their number, "*Fifty years ago*, our numbers

* Senate Ex. Docs. Nos. 15 and 16, 39th Congress, 2d session.
† Senate Ex. Doc. No. 13, 40th Congress, 1st session.

were many. *Once*, we covered this great continent. From East to West, and from North to South, was the Red Man's Country, and the Red Man's home. *To-day*, we are few in number. We are fast dwindling away:—falling, like the leaves of the forest, to rise no more."‡

According to the census returns, the policy that has been pursued towards these Indians, has reduced their numbers from 400,764, which was their population in 1850,* to 331,093 which was their population in 1860,† being a decrease in the intervening period of ten years, of 69,671, or more than one-sixth of all the Indians that existed in our country at the time the census of 1850 was taken!

But, this is now past. All we can do with these facts, startling though they be, is to make them a basis from which to plead for a change of policy, and to draw from them lessons of experience and instruction as guides for the future. The future is still left to us; and although fears exist in contemplating it, hopes rise superior to them. As, in the practice of continued cruelty upon an individual, a point may be reached in his injured physical system, from which the most unremitted subsequent kindness cannot restore him, nor the most assiduous nursing and attention prevent his going down to an untimely grave; so, continued injustice, wrongs, outrages and cruelties, practiced by a powerful nation upon a weak people, may be carried to such an extent, that restoration is impossible, and nothing remain but ultimate extermination or extinction.

But, we rejoice to believe, this point is by no means reached in regard to the Indians. There is great ground for hope, that by the government pursuing a kind, just, and liberal policy towards them in future, they may be preserved and enlightened; and in order that such humane policy may be inaugurated towards them, is the object of this earnest and solemn appeal on their behalf.

A great amount of evidence is afforded by the Reports and Documents herein before enumerated which you have published, that the Indians are highly capable of civilization and enlightenment, and of conducting agricultural, mechanical and manufacturing pursuits, when properly instructed, protected and influenced, not only sufficient for their own support, but to have a surplus.

The following interesting picture of the Indian character, drawn by Hon. John B. Sanborn, Special Indian Commissioner, and published by government, has much in it which is highly suggestive and encouraging:

"Seen in their native state," he says, "and before they have been brought in contact with civilized men, the Indians have many of the noblest traits. They have great love for fame and glory; great contempt for suffering and death; and not one element in their nature that will lead them, under any circumstances, to submit to any form or condition of slavery. They have quite correct and philosophical ideas of government, and of laws; all have a belief in a future state, where the conditions will depend upon con-

‡Letter from Enmegahbowh, of Minnesota, an Indian Missionary, to one of your present Memorialists.

*Census of 1850, page 94. †Census of 1860, pages 135 and 136.

duct during earthly existence: they have good powers of thought and reason, and not a few of each tribe have the rare faculty of oratory. Are there not sufficient traits and elements of character here, by proper influence and training, to develop into a noble civilized race? They seem to be, in no respect, inferior to our European ancestors, at and previous to the invasion of Cæsar.—They are savage and nomadic; so were the European races.—They are war-like and brave; so were the European races; perhaps the latter were less so. They are superstitious and religious; so were the European races. They are revengeful; so were the European races: and there seems to be nothing in their nature or condition, to preclude them from civilization, that might not be found in the nature and disposition of our ancestors, except that our ancestors, when overrun and crushed by the Roman power, submitted to the condition of slavery; whereas this race will all die free, rather than live slaves. It is therefore to be fairly concluded, when this race is compared with any of those who, from a state of barbarism, have risen to civilization, that we find them in no respect inferior, and that there is nothing in the natural organization and condition of the Indians, to preclude them from civilization and mental culture. But, if their natural organization and condition do not preclude them from civilization and general development, then we must be pursuing an erroneous policy, or failing to carry a policy which is sound in itself, into effect. For, the result has been, to drive an independent and lordly race into the condition of dependents and beggars; to convert generous, grateful, and noble spirits, into craven, bitter, and degraded souls; to degrade and destroy the *man*, and cultivate and develop the fiend."*

Witness the advancing condition of the remnant of the once powerful Confederation of the Six Nations, in the State of New York, as exhibited in the several late reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In his report of last year he says: "For the most part, these people (the Indians of New York) are industrious and intelligent in the care of their farms, and succeed in making a fair living by their labor. Of many of them, it may be said, they are not surpassed by the whites in the care and diligence with which they pursue their business, or the success which crowns their efforts, as may be seen at the Annual Agricultural Fairs which have been instituted among them.

"These Indians exhibit a great interest in the education of their children; and, as their location is such as to give them the benefit of the common school system of the State of New York, they are not slow to avail themselves of the privilege, there being twenty-three schools among them, containing eight hundred and seventy-two scholars, out of a population of under four thousand, a larger proportion of scholars to the total population, than obtains in most white communities. Notwithstanding the ravages of the small-pox among the Tonawandas, by which forty-four persons died, the average number of births in the agency, for the past year, has exceeded the deaths,"† so that the whole population is increasing."

*Letter of Secretary of Interior; Senate Ex. Doc. No. 13, 40th Congress, 1st Session, page 68.

†Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1866, page 60.

Governor Fenton, of the State of New York, in his last annual message to the Legislature, says: "These Indians in the State of New York, living upon reservations, have steadily increased in population for the last twenty-five years, without being indebted to immigration for the result. This growth of the Aboriginal race is opposed to the theory of their final extinction; and their gradual improvement in intelligence and thrift, even induces the hope, that whenever they shall have conformed to the usages of civilized people in respect to the marriage relation, they will be prepared to receive their lands, now held in common, as individual property, and the principal of their annuities. The motives which incite men to acquire wealth and inheritance for their families would then operate in the Indians with appropriate effect, and they might fitly receive and assume all the privileges and duties of the citizen."*

These facts and conclusions are of great interest and significance, in the present condition of the Indian question among the tribes west of the Mississippi. We desire that our "government may calmly weigh the result of the experiment of kind treatment and fostering care of the Indians in Western New York. There are enough thousands of these Indians to make the experiment of real value; and the more so, because they have been, and are, divided into separate bands—miniature nationalities—encompassed about with destructive influences, in addition to the inherent tendency in small communities to *become extinct* from the intermarriage of blood relations, and to *lose heart* from the numerical weakness of their respective communities. If the New York Indians could live and pass the crisis, and begin to thrive and to increase in population, steadily and permanently, as shown by the reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, by the census returns, and by the message of the Governor of New York, there can be no ground for despairing of like results any where, where kind treatment and honest regard for their rights, can be extended to the Indian race, for a sufficient length of time to give them faith in the permanence of such a policy."†

A change of our Indian policy, on the part of the government, being therefore evidently demanded by every consideration of humanity, justice and Christianity, your memorialists solicit your attention to the four following points, which, in their judgment, if faithfully acted upon by those in authority, will secure the objects so ardently desired by all who have regard for the eternal principles of right and justice—the dictates of Christianity.

First.—To restore peace between the Indians and the government upon the most fair, just, and liberal terms to them, so as to be likely to secure from all the tribes, their faithful observance of the stipulations entered into. N. G. Taylor, the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his report to Congress, dated July 12th, 1867, says: "We can have all we want from the Indians, and peace without war, if we so will, with entire security upon all our

*Message of Governor Fenton to the New York Legislature, Jan'y 2d, 1867, page 26.

†Letter from Asher Wright, the benevolent Missionary on the Cattaraugus Reservation, to your memorialists.

frontiers, and in all our territorial domain, at a cost of less than two days' expenses of the existing war, to wit, a quarter of a million of dollars; and in less than one hundred days; and this can be done simply by retracing our wrong steps, and by doing right."† Oh! in the name of all that is sacred, let this at once be done. Let the representatives of a Christian nation, *immediately* retrace any wrong steps which may have been taken, and have all their transactions and intercourse with these, their wards, governed by the strictest principles of justice and kindness, and an honest regard for their rights and interests, for all time to come, so as to restore and preserve the blessings of peace.

Second.—Let the agents and employees who are sent to reside among the Indians, be persons of high character and strict morality, without any regard to party bias; and let the Indians be secured and protected from intrusion and encroachment by white settlers, and allow an easy and prompt means of redress for wrong and injury inflicted upon them by the whites, through the *proceedings* of a *judicial tribunal.*

Third.—A difficulty of no small magnitude, as the publications referred to abundantly prove, attends the administration of the affairs of the Indian Bureau. We trust that, in your wisdom, some measure may be devised to render it more prompt and efficient, to carry out the benevolent purposes of government, protect the Indians in their just rights, and secure them from the intrusion of the whites upon their reservations, or injury and abuse from the frontier settlers.

Fourth.—Assign to the Indians a number of fertile tracts of well watered country, as *permanent reservations, to be solemnly secured to them forever*, and of ample dimensions for the liberal accommodation of the whole number of Indians in all the Western Territories, to which the Indians shall be invited, and, by being liberally furnished there with food, and all the necessaries of life, *induced* to remove, and upon which all shall ultimately be collected who wish to retain their tribal character. There, supply them well with seeds, stock, farming implements, and manufacturing tools, and place among them, on these reservations, suitable, peaceful, enlightened, and conscientious persons, to instruct them in agriculture, manufactures, the mechanic arts, and household duties, as well as in all the necessary school learning, and protect them from the intrusion of all others. Then, in a little time, instead of the precarious dependence, as at present, upon the buffalo, the deer, and the bear, in the forest, for the subsistence of themselves and their families, they would have the oxen, the sheep, and the swine in their fields at home, whence they can be at any time procured. This is the present condition of the Indians in Western New York, as has been already stated in this memorial, (and to which statement we particularly solicit attention,) who, but comparatively a few years ago, gave no more promise of improvement, or of their present advanced condition, than do now the various tribes west of the Mississippi river. Here is positive ground on which to rest the feeling of great encouragement and hope.

†Letter of Secretary of Interior; Senate Ex. Doc. No. 13, 40th Congress, 1st Session page 4.

In conclusion, your memorialists respectfully and earnestly crave, that the Great Spirit, in whom the Indian trusts, and unto whom the white man prays, may so enlighten the understandings, and imbue the hearts of all with humanity, justice and mercy, that our people, and the remnant of our red brethren, may, in all the future, live in harmony, peace, and love, and mutually practice truth, justice and kindness towards each other, and thus glorify our Father who is Heaven, and invite a continuance of His blessings to *us*, to our *beloved country*, and to *our posterity*. Amen.

MARTHA E. TYSON,
LYDIA JEFFERIS,
CATHARINE M. SMITH,
REBECCA TURNER,
MARGARET E. HALLOWELL,
RICHARD T. BENTLEY,
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SAMUEL TOWNSEND,
GERARD H. REESE,
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JOSEPH M. WOOD,
BENJ'N HALLOWELL,

Delegates from Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends.

DEBORAH F. WHARTON,
LUCRETIA MOTT,
DANIEL FOULKE,
WILLIAM DORSEY,
RICHARD MOORE,
ELIAS HICKS,

From Phila. Yearly Meeting.

RACHEL HICKS,
WILLIAM H. MACY,
GIDEON FROST,
FRANKLIN HAINES,

From New York Yearly Meeting.

PHEBE W. CORNELL,
SARAH D. SEARING,
JOHN SEARING,
WILLIAM CORNELL,
JOSEPH THORNE,

From Genesee Yearly Meeting.

JOSEPH COPE,
ELI GARRETSON,
SAMUEL S. TOMLINSON,
NATHAN P. GRISSELL,

From Ohio Yearly Meeting.

JASON EVANS,
AARON WRIGHT,
WILLIAM PARRY,
ROBERT HATTON,
SETH FURNAS,

From Indiana Yearly Meeting.

Post Script.—In promoting the welfare of the Indians, and fulfilling the benevolent intentions of the government towards them, such services as we may be able to render will be given without receiving any pecuniary return, from either the nation or the Indians.

Communications upon the subject may be addressed to

BENJ'N HALLOWELL,
Secretary of the Conference,
Sandy Spring, Md.

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